

SAVING ENERGY IN OUR COUNTRY

WHAT CAN GOVERNMENT DO?

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Why do we use so much energy in the United States?

The cost of most forms of energy in this country has been relatively inexpensive and readily available. Technology and progress have created many more uses for energy. With lots of energy available and lower prices, we used more, such as electricity.

This attitude toward energy use began to change in the 1970s. Buying oil from other countries became much more expensive. Sometimes, we even had trouble getting it. Also people started to be concerned about how the environment is affected by how we use energy and how much energy we use. For the first time, it became important for us to reduce our energy use. All of us can do our part.

Government can help to save energy and protect the environment. Here are a few examples:



Set standards.

In 1992 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced ENERGY STAR® as a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, those gases which can trap the sun's heat in our atmosphere. Computers and monitors were the first labeled products. In 1995, EPA expanded the label to add office equipment products and residential heating and cooling equipment. In 1996, EPA partnered with the U.S. Department of Energy and now the ENERGY STAR label is on most major appliances, office equipment, lighting, home electronics – even new homes and commercial and industrial buildings.



Encourage conservation.

The government has passed many laws to encourage people to conserve energy. Building codes require energy-efficient construction. Other laws support recycling programs and energy-saving improvements, such as lighting in homes and businesses.

In addition to labels, ENERGY STAR provides the technical information and tools to help organizations and consumers choose energy-efficient solutions. ENERGY STAR has successfully delivered energy and cost savings across the country, saving businesses, organizations, and consumers more than \$7 billion in energy costs every year.



Support new energy sources.

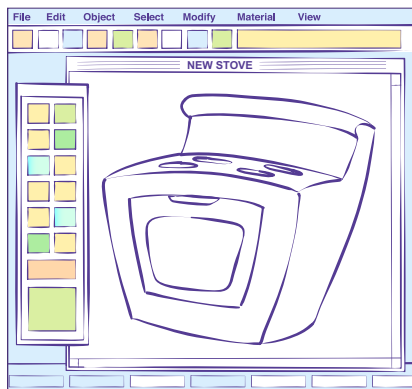
Fossil fuels are limited, and using them to make electricity produces emissions. So, we need to develop more efficient ways to use fossil fuels, as well as ways to use other energy sources. It takes time and money. The Federal government and some state governments can provide money to help companies and organizations develop better emission controls, more efficient ways to use fossil fuels and products that are more energy efficient.

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WHAT CAN INDUSTRY DO?

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Industry can help to save energy and protect the environment. Here are a few examples:



Develop energy-saving products.

Government has enacted laws that call for industry to make energy-saving products. For example, appliance manufacturers make new refrigerators, furnaces and other appliances so that they use less energy than earlier models.

To make even more energy improvements in the future means the products must be redesigned, which sometimes requires additional investment, over the traditional way of making a product. The extra cost to produce the product is usually passed along to us through higher prices. It's important for our energy future and our environment that industry continues to develop new products that save energy. And it's important that we buy these new energy-saving products when possible. When we increase the demand for these products, the price to produce them and to buy them will come down.



Use energy carefully.

American businesses use about two-thirds of the energy consumed in our country each year. So it is important that they save energy whenever possible.

Industries have found many ways to save energy. They have learned how to make the same products using less energy. They have weatherized their buildings. They have conserved energy by turning off motors, lights and other energy users when they are not being used. Today, American industries use less energy than they did in 1980, even though they make more products.

Industries can continue to save energy. They can use more recycled materials to make products. They can encourage employees to conserve energy whenever possible. And they can continue to improve efficiency, using less energy to make the same or more goods and products.

They'll Pay You to Save Energy

Xcel Energy encourages customers to save energy. Depending on where you live, when you buy energy-efficient heating and cooling equipment, you can receive some of the cost back through a rebate. Other programs help pay for home energy audits, encourage the use of compact fluorescent light bulbs and provide high-efficiency showerheads.

Why would a company that sells energy pay customers to use less energy? The answer is mathematical. It costs the utility less to pay customers for reducing their energy use than it costs to build new power plants. Plus, it helps us conserve our natural resources for future generations.

